

**Connecting 350 and Study Abroad:  
Cross-Cultural Connections and the Global Climate Movement**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
Goal and Methods .....	4
Resources Developed .....	5
Focus Groups.....	6
Green Passport and Facebook .....	8
Study Abroad Website .....	9
SIT Conference .....	9
Other Study Abroad Institutions .....	11
Pre-departure Meetings .....	13
350 Pre-departure Meetings.....	14
Conclusion .....	15
Successes and Limitations .....	15
Recommendations.....	17
General Thoughts .....	18
Appendices .....	21
A. Website locations for project resources.....	21
B. Detailed focus group notes .....	22
C. Flyer for general pre-departure meetings .....	29
D. Outline for 350-specific pre-departure meetings .....	30

## **Introduction**

Within the broader goal of “Getting to 350,” our project focuses on spreading global awareness of what 350 is and what it means. To this end, we worked with Kelly Blynn and Jeremy Osborn from 350.org along with Stacey Thebodo, Assistant Director of International Programs and Off-Campus Study in the Middlebury Study Abroad office, to encourage Middlebury students—and students all over the country—who will be studying abroad in the fall of 2009 to participate in 350.org’s International Day of Climate Action.

350.org is an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis. The focus is on the number 350, as in 350 parts per million (ppm). This is the level scientists such as NASA’s James Hansen have identified as the safe upper limit for the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere. The fall of 2009 will be a crucial time for the climate movement because in December 2009 world leaders will meet in Copenhagen, Denmark to craft a new global treaty on cutting emissions.

This is where the date October 24, 2009 comes in. 350.org has designated this date as an “International Day of Climate Action” and is working to encourage people around the world to organize and register climate actions (including bike rides, rallies, tree-plantings, protests, etc.) in their communities. According to the 350.org website, “the only thing preventing us from tackling the climate crisis quickly and equitably is a lack of political will.” The hope is that by demonstrating to world leaders six weeks before this crucial meeting in Copenhagen that 350 ppm is the goal, we as a global community can commit to important and meaningful legislation before it is too late.

With this in mind, our goal for this project was to help 350.org create this political will globally by encouraging fall 2009 study abroad students to get involved in 350 actions while

abroad. Students studying abroad have a unique opportunity to take part in this movement as 350 messengers by participating in, planning, and documenting actions on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2009. In doing so, they will learn about their study abroad community and share this community's perspective on climate change with the world, and thus contribute to this global movement.

In order to accomplish our goal of getting future study abroad students involved in the International Day of Climate Action, we created and presented a pre-departure presentation for Middlebury students. In addition, we developed handouts and a video that are available on the Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website. We also shared these resources with other study abroad programs throughout the country.

The focus of the presentation, handouts and video is to encourage students to engage in their communities through climate action while abroad. We also provide suggestions for how to best participate in the October 24<sup>th</sup> 2009 International Day of Climate Action within their abroad communities. In developing these resources we aimed to provide general recommendations and ideas as well as more specific regional information. The more specific regional information is important for providing guidance on cultural differences and how best to approach the issue of climate change in different regions of the world. Information, both general and regional, came from recommendations from international students and previous study abroad participants at Middlebury. We hope these resources will encourage students studying abroad to become involved in the International Day of Climate Action.

## **Goal and Methods**

Ultimately, we hoped to frame study abroad as an opportunity to learn about and share experiences regarding climate change in different places. Our goal was to commit students to spread the word about 350.org and climate change while abroad by setting up an event for October 24<sup>th</sup> 2009.

In the process of preparing materials for pre-departure meetings we met with focus groups of returning study abroad students and international students to gain a better understanding of how to approach the goal of 350 in different countries or regions. We contacted representatives of study abroad programs and institutions to gather information about how study abroad programs address environmental issues, including climate change. We used this information to create a core presentation and handout for two 350-specific study abroad pre-departure meetings at Middlebury College. In this presentation we addressed in detail how to participate in climate action and spread the story of 350 abroad.

Another major component of our project involved providing materials for other study abroad programs. We did this to ensure that program directors and students at Middlebury and beyond have access to the information we presented in our pre-departure 350 presentations. Additionally, two members of our group presented at a School of International Training conference on social and ecological renewal. In this presentation the two students provided both general information about 350.org and information on our specific efforts to engage study abroad students. Finally, we created a 5 minute video and posted it online (see Appendix A). We collaborated with Green Passport and created a 350 Study Abroad Facebook group to provide a place for study abroad students interested in 350 to connect online. Our materials have been incorporated into the

Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website and will be featured on Abroad View's website. They will also be presented in an article in the study abroad magazine's September, 2009 edition.

## **Resources Developed**

At the recommendation of other study abroad institutions, and in trying to expand the influence of this project, we created some resources to help with spreading the information we gathered. The first is a brief description about the 350 campaign, which closely mirrors information found on the Mission Statement page of 350.org's website. The second is a 4-page information packet. The first 2 pages are a pdf from the 350.org website that generally explains 350. The other 2 pages relate specifically to study abroad and include information about where to start, action ideas, and region-specific cultural considerations. There are two versions of this handout—one that is Middlebury specific and one that is more general. The third resource is a brief 5 minute video in which we verbally explain the 350 campaign and how study abroad students can get involved. These materials are posted on the Middlebury College Sustainable Study Abroad website, and the link has been sent out on the study abroad list serve and posted on the 350 Green Passport page and on the 350 Study Abroad Facebook group. In addition, 350.org has its own guide for students studying abroad who want to become involved in 350.org and the International Day of Climate Action and this is also available on the Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website. A table of resources and their locations is available in Appendix A.

## Focus Groups

We conducted three focus groups to get feedback from people who have spent time in other countries. Two of the focus groups were for returned study abroad students, and the third was for international students. The goal for these focus groups was to learn about how people engage in social, environmental, and political issues abroad in their specific regional and cultural context, and how students can involve people from their study-abroad communities in the International Day of Climate Action.

*Questions we tried to cover in each focus group*

### Returned Study Abroad Students

Introduce 350 and our project

Introductions: Name, Where you studied abroad

- Did you witness any forms of civic engagement and/or activism? If so, did you participate at any point? If not, how did people engage in social issues? Was activism widespread and/or culturally accepted as a means of civic engagement?
- To what extent were people concerned with global warming/global issues?
- How is global climate change framed in the country where you studied? Is it environmental/social/economic? How do you see global climate change affecting your community abroad?
- Did the government / national agenda of your area of study appear to be concerned with climate change?
- Do you have any contacts who may be able to help us and/or fall study abroad students with this project, especially in the climate action realm?
- How would you have carried out this goal?
- Can you recommend any strategies for connecting with people in general and/or over climate issues?

### International Students

Introduce 350 and our project

Introductions: Name, Where you're from

- How do people engage in social issues in your country? Is activism widespread and/or culturally accepted as a means of civic engagement?
- What does being an environmentalist mean where you come from? Is it common?
- To what extent are people concerned with global warming/global issues?
- How is global climate change framed in your home country? Is it environmental/social/economic? How do you see global climate change affecting your community?
- Does the government / national agenda of your area of study appear to be concerned with climate change?

- How would you engage in these issues at home? How would you mobilize people to participate in climate action?
- Do you see people being receptive to visitors (Americans/Middkids in particular) from other countries trying to engage them on these issues?
- Can you recommend any strategies for connecting with people in general and/or over climate issues?
- Do you have any contacts who may be able to help us and/or fall study abroad students with this project, especially in the climate action realm?

Although there was not a huge turnout for the focus groups (about 15 people), we had a very diverse regional representation. During the focus groups, each of us took notes on the comments of one or two participants. We compiled the notes into country and region-specific observations and suggestions and created a list of points that we thought applied to studying abroad generally. A summary of the notes is included below. More detailed information from specific people and countries is available in Appendix B.

### *Overarching Points*

- This is a way to connect with communities → will help you as a study abroad student become more integrated with where you are
- Internships are a great way to encourage a 350 action
  - Use existing Middlebury contacts and get program directors to help you connect with similarly minded people in country
- Children are enthusiastic supporters and are a great way to get involved and plan a 350 action (with schools, children's groups)
- Encourage using the sustainability grants to organize a 350 action
  - Sustainability Grants are offered at Middlebury College. For more information please visit:  
<<http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/grants.htm>>
- Try and work with study abroad coordinators in country to include information in the orientation packets
  - When people are in country they might be more able to think of a 350 action
- Volunteering could be an avenue to meet people and collaborate with 350 action
- Important to form relationships and then address the issue
  - Don't take advantage of people
- We in the U.S. can afford to care and people in other places often have other priorities (poverty issues) → have to tread delicately here
  - Avoid proselytizing
- People do environmental things because they are cheap and make sense → try and connect climate change action with practical things



- This needs to be framed as a world issue, not an issue solely for “wealthy people”—people address the consequences of climate change everywhere but they relate to them in particular ways—for example, presenting issues as “environmental” may appear elitist
- 350 is a convenient vehicle for (a) learning about how people in the host country think about and respond to climate change and (b) serving as a conduit for local residents to share their experiences more broadly
  - For example, 350 serves as a way to learn about organic farms in southern France or about solar-powered communities in China
  - Students can then use that knowledge to share with others in the host country and to build upon what’s already happening

### *Region-specific Information*

- Latin America
  - People are pretty politically active
  - They care a lot about economics
  - Organizing is the issue, not as much getting people interested
- Europe
  - Lots of student activism and striking in general → this type of action common
  - Hard to connect in big cities, so this would be a good way to get past that
  - Lots of talk, not as much action
- Africa
  - People have other priorities from climate change → have to frame it in a way that connects to people’s every day lives
- Asia
  - China
    - Radical political/social action not going to be the way to go about this
    - Connect with students
    - Connect through the internet
    - Not a great sense of personal agency
- India
  - Environmental issues big in India
    - Health is even bigger → connect the two
  - Large rallies/protests not unusual or difficult

## **Green Passport and Facebook**

Green Passport is another way study abroad students can get involved in environmental issues abroad. Green Passport is an online social network designed specifically for students studying abroad who are committed to living and traveling sustainably (for more information please visit: <<http://greenpassport.ning.com/>>). Although Green Passport is focused on

sustainable abroad experiences, we think it is a great organization to be in contact with. We had a conversation with them by phone in which we discussed networking opportunities and creating a “350 Study Abroad” group that students can use to connect and share ideas while abroad. The page for this group can be used as a source of information and includes links to the 350.org website, links to the promotional/informational video we created, and a link to the Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad page that hosts the resources we developed during this project. We also created a Facebook group to serve a similar purpose, also titled “350 Study Abroad.” These pages serve as online networking space where students can discuss action ideas; talk about problems and successes; and post blogs, videos, and pictures.

### **Study Abroad Website**

The Middlebury Sustainability Study Abroad website hosts the resources we developed during this project. There is a brief introduction to 350.org, the 5 minute video, and the two information pages we created—one general and one Middlebury specific. A link to this site will be sent out on a list serve to all study abroad programs. This site will serve as a place where students can learn more about the possibility of becoming involved with 350 while abroad.

### **SIT Conference**

On Saturday April 18, 2009 two of us traveled to the School for International Training (SIT) campus in Brattleboro to attend their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual RENEW Conference on social and ecological renewal. There, we presented the number 350, the 350 campaign, and how we have been working on connecting study abroad students to the global climate movement. The presentation was followed by a half hour of questions. The questions section took the form of an open discussion, with audience members answering questions as often as we did, and generated

an interesting conversation on how to get to 350 and how to engage people on the issue of climate change.

Some of the most-discussed topics were the science behind climate change and what it will take to get there, how to talk to climate change deniers about the issue, and specific ideas for actions that people could do in Vermont. One community member from Massachusetts shared her community's idea, which was to transfer the 350.org short video onto a film reel and get local movie theaters to play it during the opening previews. They found that although it was expensive to get the digital movie onto film, once they had it on a film reel the movie theaters were more than willing to play it. This seemed like an especially influential and creative way to get the 350 message heard.

The presentation was fairly well attended with about twenty individuals ranging from graduate students to teachers to community members. It served as a good way to spread the word about our project, hear the ideas of others, and tune up for our upcoming pre-departure meetings on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 2009.

Below is the presentation description we sent to SIT for publicity and organizational purposes.

*Description of the 350.org presentation for the SIT conference*

Recent science tells us that in order to maintain life on earth as we know it we will need to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million. Since we have already raised this number to 387 parts per million and carbon dioxide emissions are still rising, this is an immense challenge that will require global cooperation. 350.org is building a worldwide movement to promote climate change awareness and innovative solutions, bring new voices to the table, and unite people in a common call to action. It will culminate in the Global Day of Climate Action on October 24, 2009, when people all over the world will participate in creative actions that show politicians that the climate meeting in Copenhagen must result in strong international climate change policy. A group of Middlebury College students is working with 350.org to mobilize students studying abroad in the fall to take local action and connect their communities to this global movement.

A full copy of our SIT presentation is archived on CD and available through the Middlebury College Environmental Studies Program.

## **Other Study Abroad Institutions**

Since one of our objectives for this project was to reach study abroad students beyond Middlebury College, we networked with other study abroad institutions to find out how best to do this. With the help of Stacey Thebodo from the Middlebury study abroad office, we posted on a sustainable study abroad list serve about our project and asked interested institutions to respond. The goal was to ask them what environment-related options they currently offer study abroad students, get their feedback on what types of information would be helpful for them, and create an information packet or flyer to help them get students involved with 350.org and the International Day of Action. Below is the post we put on the list serve to reach out to study abroad institutions interested in incorporating environmental initiatives into their programs:

Hello,

We are a group of five Middlebury College students, all environmental studies majors, who are working on a project this semester with 350.org. Our goal for this project is to get students going abroad next fall really excited about participating in global climate action, namely the "international day of climate action" (350.org) on October 24, 2009 when groups of people around the world will demonstrate to their leaders how important the number 350 is. We will be encouraging students to engage with their study abroad communities on climate change issues and our ultimate goal is to inspire them to organize or participate in local actions on October 24th. We are currently working on creating a presentation and information packet on how students can connect with their study abroad communities in meaningful ways and get involved in this international environmental movement.

In order to spread this idea among students going abroad in the fall we are trying to make this project applicable to study abroad programs at other institutions. If you have any suggestions as to what kinds of information would be most useful in spreading this idea and inspiring students to get involved, we would love to hear from you. Also, since this project is focused around getting students involved specifically in the October 24th actions, if you have specific dates by which you would need the information in order to get it to the fall study abroad students we would do our best meet those deadlines.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact any one of us. We look forward to hearing from you!

We received 7 responses from study abroad representatives, expressing interest in our project and offering further information. Stacey Thebodo also provided us with the contact information of a few other people involved with study abroad programs who might be interested in our project or able to provide us with guidance and ideas. We contacted these programs by phone over spring break and received some ideas about what we could do to help them promote 350 and the International Day of Climate Action. Organizations we contacted include Living Routes, CET Academic Programs, Sea Semester, the School for International Training (SIT), University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Abroad View, Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS), Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE), Yale, and Augsburg College. Included below is an outline of topics we tried to cover during the calls and questions we asked.

Introduce ourselves and the 350.org project

What environmentally related study abroad programs do you offer?

As an institution do you support or promote environmental initiatives for study abroad students? Do you know about Green Passport, are you affiliated? (UNC guy founded this)

How do you see study abroad students getting involved with environmental issues? How does it fit into your program? Courses? Internships? Community partners?

Incorporating climate change issue into non-environmental spheres

Would you be interested in trying to incorporate the 350 international day of climate action in your programs for the fall?

What type of materials would be helpful for you to implement this?

Presentation?

Ideas?

Website information?

What about long term engagement with locals and communities on the issue of climate change?

Most programs are members of Green Passport and some have specific programs that focus on the environment. CET Academic Programs had already begun to incorporate 350 and the International Day of Climate Action into their programs before we contacted them. The most useful information we got from these phone calls were suggestions on what types of information

would be most useful to these programs in promoting student involvement in 350 actions. Suggestions included providing written material about 350.org, proposing ideas for actions, and creating a video outlining the campaign and project. The general consensus was that more information is better! In response we created a series of useful resources that explain 350. These resources are detailed previously in “Resources Developed” and their locations are provided in Appendix A.

## **Pre-departure Meetings**

In order to get future Middlebury study abroad students interested in 350.org we gave a short presentation at each study abroad pre-departure meeting. During these meetings we handed out a brochure to remind students when and where our 350-specific pre-departure meetings would be held. A sign-up sheet was also provided so interested students could sign up to receive email reminders. Included below is an outline of what we talked about at each meeting. The flyer advertising these meetings can be found in Appendix C.

### *Pre-Departure Meeting Talking Points*

- Personal Introduction
- Who we are
  - ES 401 students—“Getting to 350”; draw the hockey stick
  - Working with 350.org—mobilizing a global climate movement.
  - Climate Change movement—Powershift
- What is 350.org?
  - Powershift
  - October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009—day of climate action
  - Copenhagen Negotiations—Next December—UN gathering to discuss climate policy. Action to encourage global participation in climate policy
  - Grassroots climate change action
- Our project
  - 350.org + study abroad
  - Help you connect to your study abroad community so you can help them connect them to this broader global issue
- YOU + community/locals = collective action for 350

- An example—getting people together from the community and planning 350 trees/flowers. Middlebury High School student pulled together 1,500 monks to participate in a peaceful climate rally.
- 350.org has a coordinator on every continent. Connect with them to engage in actions that are already in place.
- Documentation—post videos/photos online to connect with the global community
- Sustainability Grants
- Engage in any way you can.
- Meetings: The Orchard, Hillcrest
  - Tuesday, April 21 @ 8:30
  - Wednesday, April 22 @ 4:30
- Sign-up sheet
  - Name and email address

### **350 Pre-departure Meetings**

After the general pre-departure meetings, we held our own pre-departure meetings specifically for students who were interested in 350.org and participating in the International Day of Climate Action. These presentations took place on April 21 and 22, 2009. In the weeks preceding the presentations we posted flyers around campus and emailed students going abroad in the fall in order to promote the event. In the presentations we introduced 350.org and the International Day of Climate Action and focused on getting students excited about—and committed to—participating. We also provided specific information about how students can get involved and specific action ideas. Afterwards, we talked with a number of students who had additional questions and interests, especially about the region-specific information we gathered. Nine students attended the meetings, and we are planning to follow-up with them if they need extra support. An email reminder has been sent to all students going abroad next fall alerting them to the resources now posted on the Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website. An outline of the 350 specific pre-departure presentation is available in Appendix D and the full PowerPoint presentation is archived on CD and available through the Middlebury College Environmental Studies Program.

## **Conclusion**

### *Successes and Limitations*

Even though our community partners were from a much larger definition of community, we never felt hindered by only speaking with Kelly Blynn and Jeremy Osborn through email and by phone. In a way, we benefited from our more limited communication in that we were able to truly make the project ours. We had the independence to work on our own timeline and shape our final product. Additionally, our community partners including Stacey Thebodo were always extremely responsive to our emails, which allowed the group to work through questions quickly.

We would have liked to have been able to speak with more returned study abroad students and international students. We felt that we had a fairly good representation of returned study abroad students regionally, with lapses only in English-speaking countries, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. We were a little disappointed by the number of international students at our focus groups. Even though we reached out to these students in a number of ways—including personal emails—attendance for these focus groups was very low.

One limitation we did experience was within the Middlebury community itself. We attended all of the Middlebury study abroad pre-departure meetings to announce and promote our separate, more specific 350 pre-departure presentations and followed up with email reminders and posters around campus. Despite these efforts, attendance at our two 350 specific presentations was low. With the number of students going abroad in the fall probably being somewhere in the 200 range, we expected to see a little more interest. Nevertheless, the students that did attend our meetings seemed to be truly interested in getting involved with 350 while they are abroad. We fully expect some of these students to either create their own 350 actions while abroad or get involved in actions already occurring. Regardless of how many people actually



attended our pre-departure meetings, the process of creating the presentation and filming it was extremely useful for our interactions with other study abroad programs. Entering into this project, we thought we would connect mostly with individual students. However, we have found that our success has really lain in connecting with study abroad institutions, coordinators, and program providers. Climate change and 350 are already a pretty well known narrative here at Middlebury but with our project we can reach more people at other colleges and universities that perhaps have not known as much about the movement before now. We have a short video explaining our project and its goals and can provide the 350 specific pre-departure presentation itself to others for their own personal use. Additionally, we have handouts that can be included in study abroad information packets for students. We are in the process of having these handouts translated into different languages through Kelly Blynn and 350.org so that Middlebury in-country coordinators can provide them to incoming students during orientation. We will also provide these resources on the Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad web page so that Middlebury students and students studying abroad through other institutions can peruse it at their leisure.

One general limitation we had was that this project occurred in the spring while the International Day of Climate Action is happening in the fall of this year. Even though the spring is when students begin to prepare for their time abroad, the actual abroad experience is still quite far away. It is hard to catch Middlebury College students' attention about events happening so far in the future. The challenge will be to keep 350, climate change and the International Day of Climate Action up front in their minds so that when they do finally go abroad they can implement a 350 action effectively. We hope that as our project expands beyond what we have

done this semester, there will be reminders of October 24, 2009 that will keep students engaged and thinking about creating actions.

A final limitation we encountered, which the larger 350.org group also experiences, is the uncertainty about what it would take to get to 350 ppm in the atmosphere. This question arose both at the SIT conference and at our class's final oral presentation. Since the science recommending 350 ppm as the goal for climate change legislation is relatively recent<sup>1</sup> the exact emissions reductions needed to reach this goal are still not known. This uncertainty has made some people nervous about emphasizing 350 ppm as our goal. However, we continue to identify with the ambitious quality of the goal. Regardless of how feasible the goal of 350 ppm in the atmosphere is, we have to shoot high and push ourselves to really make a difference. Hopefully this scientific information will soon become available to further strengthen the argument for 350.

### *Recommendations*

Our biggest recommendation is just that this project should continue in one form or another. We have laid the groundwork for connecting climate change to study abroad experiences specifically around the International Day of Climate Action. However, this project can continue beyond that with students more generally engaging over the global issue of climate change while abroad. We hope that the study abroad institutions we have worked with and have provided materials to will continue to emphasize this idea beyond this fall. Because climate change truly is a global issue that will affect everyone, it is an issue that students can connect over wherever they are.

Another idea we had to expand this project beyond this semester is to work with universities in other countries. We have worked with many study abroad institutions and

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<sup>1</sup> See Hansen et al., "Target atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>: Where should humanity aim," (2008), *The Open Atmospheric Science Journal* 2: 217-31.

colleges in the United States to spread our message. One step further would be to engage with universities directly in other countries. Students from the United States are not the only ones who study abroad and this information can be useful to students everywhere who want to become involved in the global climate movement.

A common theme related to study abroad in general that emerged from our focus groups was that increased communication between international students and students planning to study abroad would be beneficial. Students getting ready to study abroad have so many questions about the country they will be traveling to and love to pick the brains of returned study abroad students. We think that connecting these students getting ready to study abroad with international students would provide them with an even better resource for information on their future host country.

### *General Thoughts*

Throughout the semester, our group has enjoyed engaging in the climate movement. From Monica and Josh's beginning of the semester visit to Washington to participate in PowerShift, to Robyn and Monica's presentation at SIT, we have really been able to connect with the movement in various ways. We were able to combine our individual skills to collaborate on this great project. The feedback from Kelly Blynn, Jeremy Osborn and Stacey Thebodo has been especially useful, and we have all appreciated hearing that we have indeed helped them out.

In preparing our information for students studying abroad in the fall we came up with some general recommendations that could apply to everyone. A key point that emerged from our focus groups was to be sensitive of the U.S.'s role in the climate change crisis. Students will be coming from a position in many countries as being the main perpetrator of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Therefore, it's important not to proselytize and form relationships with people before engaging in the issue of climate change. Being culturally sensitive was another recommendation that emerged from our focus groups. Climate change affects people in different countries in different ways. Also, civil disobedience and protests are more culturally appropriate in some countries than others. In the same vein, practicality matters. Poverty is the biggest issue for citizens of many countries where Middlebury students study abroad. Carbon emissions are not really a big problem for many of these countries. However, climate change will affect these countries, regardless of their contribution to the problem. Therefore, when engaging with people on this issue practical things, like malaria nets, should be taken into account. Additionally, in some of the places where students study abroad people do not have access to the same social networking resources we do coming from the United States. Therefore, students can serve as conduits for local issues. This could be in the form of broadcasting local impacts of climate change already occurring, or in sharing their 350 action. Ultimately though, the big takeaway from our project is that climate change is a truly global issue that cannot be ignored. Because of the international character of the problem wherever study abroad students go they can engage on this issue. Without a world response for combating climate change the world will also suffer collectively.

One aspect of our project that needs to be addressed is its continuation after this semester. As second-semester college seniors we ourselves will be unable to continue this project. However, the connections we have made this semester over integrating action connecting to climate change will continue past our time at Middlebury. Stacey Thebodo is going to continue to be connected with 350.org and work to sustain the message of connected 350 with study abroad in the future. Stacey is also going to send out a reminder email to the people we have connected with at Middlebury about October 24<sup>th</sup> when they actually begin their study abroad

experience. Additionally, our information will be translated and passed on to students by Middlebury in-country coordinators to reemphasize the International Day of Climate Action at a date closer to October. We are going to emphasize signing up on 350.org so that interested students can receive email updates from the organization directly. All of our information will be posted on different websites (see table in Appendix A) to ensure that web searchers will be able to find out more about our project. We also hope that the general theme of connecting over the issue of climate change while abroad will continue beyond the International Day of Climate Action.

This project has taught our group the power of communication, especially through the different technologies we have available at our fingertips. We were able to communicate effectively with our community partners and other study abroad institutions through email and Skype. Additionally, we have been able to utilize Facebook and Green Passport for their networking capabilities. Of course the 350.org website itself has been a great resource for our project. While these global tools serve practical communication needs for building a grassroots movement, they cannot replace person-to-person connections. Study abroad students help give this global movement a human dimension.

Getting to 350 is the challenge of our generation. The Copenhagen negotiations in December 2009 will be a major step towards getting back to 350 ppm. The International Day of Climate Action on October 24, 2009 is an opportunity to ensure that a meaningful and effective international agreement is reached in Copenhagen. The actions on October 24<sup>th</sup> will be a collective representation of individual voices. We are all affected by climate change and we all have a role in solving this challenge. These personal experiences will allow individuals to connect with the global movement and influence the international political process.

## Appendix A. Website locations for project resources

<b>What</b>	<b>Where</b>
Brief description of 350 campaign	Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website: < <a href="http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/">http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/</a> >
4-page information packet (Middlebury)	Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website: < <a href="http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm">http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm</a> >
4-page information packet (general)	Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website: < <a href="http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm">http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm</a> >
5 minute video	Youtube: < <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1fdSRwcG1w">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1fdSRwcG1w</a> >  Middlebury website: < <a href="http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm">http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm</a> >
Presentations (SIT conference and 350 pre-departure)	Archived on CD: Available through Middlebury Environmental Studies Program
350.org’s guide for “350 Messengers Abroad”	Middlebury Sustainable Study Abroad website: < <a href="http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm">http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/sustainable/350.htm</a> >
Online Networking: Green Passport (350 Study Abroad group)  Facebook (350 Study Abroad group)	< <a href="http://greenpassport.ning.com/group/350studyabroad">http://greenpassport.ning.com/group/350studyabroad</a> >  < <a href="http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=4403699&amp;ref=profile#/group.php?gid=71639718037">http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=4403699&amp;ref=profile#/group.php?gid=71639718037</a> >

## Appendix B. Detailed focus group notes

Here is detailed notes on each participant from our focus groups, divided by region.

### Europe:

- Giulia Scelzo (2012), Italian
  - People are lazy/passive
    - Complain without action
  - Government is inefficient
    - People don't bother protesting or engaging because the government won't do anything anyway
  - Strikes happen regularly (too regularly to be effective)
    - Even with a strong cause, the government doesn't do anything
  - Last 2-3 years government tried to start funding renewable energy
    - Provided monetary incentives for solar panels
    - Struggled to deliver what was promised—didn't encourage renewables
  - Naples/south in general—pollution from trash is very bad
    - No dumpsters—piles of trash in outskirts of cities
    - 30 years of inefficient disposal system
  - Government realized trash problem and began recycling but system ineffective
    - Trash is kept in homes and paper's kept in plastic bags for recycling
    - Not picked up regularly—people retain trash in their homes for too long
    - Leniency puts people off of recycling (smell)—go out to the countryside and dump trash anyway
    - Police regulate dumping, but they're not effective
  - People are aware of climate change, but don't do anything about it
  - Framing of climate change could involve agriculture
    - Summer temperatures are warm and have been warmer in recent years
    - Temperature shifts affect crops for farmers
  - Between poor attitude and ineffective government climate action isn't promising
    - Laziness is a cultural thing
    - Italians complain but then claim that Italy is the best country
    - Frustrating
  - People engaging to show world rather than the government that Italians care about climate change might move people away from apathy
  - Location/region matters
    - People are more engaged in the North and in Rome
    - People are very lazy and passive in the South
  - Outsiders coming in and promoting a cause hasn't happened much, but can see it happening
    - People are receptive to learning something new
    - Italians would be willing to listen at least, if not participate
- Kelsey Nelson (2009), Paris
  - “All of the kids care” → most people go to big public universities and there are huge strikes almost every other year

- A lot of student activism → but sort of selfish → looking for something to make a big stir over → love tension
- French very environmental conscious, but they don't necessarily see it that way
  - Little things that they do, because of cost unknowingly
- Internships not required, but suggest as a way to integrate with actual French people → because
  - Emphasize this is how you engage and you have to be proactive in being part of the community
- Maybe also interact with your neighborhood → another great way to connect to communities
- Chengcheng Xu (2009), Paris and South France
  - Easily mobilized → very well established unions
  - Talking about something is different than acting
  - Us vs. them leadership is bad → discussion not necessarily a part of cultures
    - Have to form relationships and THEN start discussion
  - South France: doing real things not protesting but ACTION
    - Organic farming, reasonable
    - Community-based agriculture → don't like the protests, have to change yourself first to show action
  - We in the U.S. can afford to care → how can we demand others to care, have to connect environmental things to having a positive impact on people's lives

#### **Latin America:**

- Lilly Corenthal (2010), Chile
  - Chile has the best sources of renewable energy
  - Emotional, visceral they are very into → demonstrations heated discussions
    - More abstract stuff like climate change is hard for them to grasp
  - There are other environmental justice organizations that deal with climate related things → connection not there between the issues
  - Intellectual connection mostly → not everyday
  - She did 350 stuff with her internship → really flexible
    - School science club, environmental education program which the kids got really excited about it
    - 350 Earth Day event
    - Presented it to partner programs → they are all into now
    - Good way to connect with people really far away
      - KIDS → they get really excited
    - Student groups for environment (on campus that always exist) → 350 a way to establish a relationship
  - Sustainability grant is a good incentive for something
  - Volunteering is another good way to get connected to communities
  - Include something in study abroad packet for when you get there
- Chris Hassig (2009), Chile
  - Try to avoid proselytizing too much: we need to frame it with acknowledging that we are coming from the U.S. and need to lead on this issue
    - We also want others to know the importance of it too and that it's an international issue



- Less mobilized due to political/army nasty history
- People tied to natural environments and can see degradation personally and they know about the issues
- Student groups on environmental stuff are out there, its just hard to actually get connected with them
- Orientation is a good opportunity to incorporate 350
  - It's easier once you're already there
- Forest Orme (2009.5), Buenos Aires
  - Very loud and visible protests are common
  - People in general are highly literate in political and social issues—they are exposed to climate change as an issue; nonetheless, few care about climate change as an environmental problem as such
  - Most people are concerned about economics:
    - grain and soy production and exports
    - electricity (due to common blackouts)
    - fuel sources (mostly oil and natural gas from Bolivia and Venezuela)
      - Still, energy is not a CO2 issue but a stability and a political issue
      - Interest in biofuels is growing but agricultural fuels are not entirely supported mostly because of a general stance in favor of Pres. Chavez of Venezuela, who offers cheap oil and continental unity, and in opposition of incoming U.S. investments in wind power development
  - This needs to be framed as a world issue, not an issue solely for “wealthy people”—they address the consequences of climate change in S. America but they relate to them in particular ways—for example, presenting them as “environmental” may appear elitist
  - The biggest challenge in Buenos Aires, and even throughout S. America, is often organizing; garnering passion or interest is not the main obstacle
  - Eco-clubs: worldwide chapters that empower local youth to improve local communities
    - Could serve as a good contact throughout S. America, but the Eco-club in Buenos Aires is disorganized
  - South American program directors want to find more environmental justice organizations—most already have a social justice component
- Alex Oberg (2010): Valdevia, Chile
  - People are politically active, strikes and demonstrations are common.
  - React to crisis situations, climate change is difficult because the effects are in the future.
  - There are no good domestic energy sources, they get petroleum from Argentina. They are building hydro power plants and have good solar and wind potential.
  - Sometimes active about environmental issues. Ex: people got riled up when pollution from a paper factory began killing black swans.
    - Take advantage of existing organizations and programs. Middlebury probably has good contacts.

## Africa:

- Andrea Suozzo (2009), Kenyan coast SIT (was there during runoff elections)
  - Everything political is about tribes and money → pay people to go to rallies, pay for votes for candidates → not issue based politics
  - Fading out plastic bags → no trash system, and people use plastic a lot
    - Plastic bags everywhere and that is something visible so there is lots of support against it
      - Bring back grass/straw baskets which are practical and they see directly how it affects them
  - Didn't really see anything connected to climate change
    - Wasn't something people could see and didn't affect their daily lives
  - People do environmental things because they make sense and they are cheap
- Michael Ogutu (2012), Kenyan
  - There is advocacy for equality in terms of work and education between men and women, but it is still a big issue
  - Government uses force to suppress protests and demonstrations
  - Kenyan government has been negligent; when presented with issues it does not often respond
  - People know about global warming as a theoretical issue but seem not to connect the issue with their lives
  - There is a disconnect between farmers and other rural folk who experience famine and drought on the one hand and the policies and technologies needed to address those issues on the other hand
  - Global warming is mostly an economic, agricultural issue. But it is also political because public figures might pose with the issue in order to get elected and then discard it once in office—again, the government is not very accountable to the constituents
  - There needs to be more than protests because change won't occur in the streets alone. Spreading awareness, rather than manifesting on the street, is the challenge and is where the greatest change will occur.
  - In Kenya, people will be exploited if they attempt to teach or to work independently without the perspective and guidance of a native-born Kenyan—students studying abroad should work with existing local groups already positioned in the community and prepared to address this issue
  - ISO students should be involved—should want to be involved—in helping Middlebury students navigate home countries and engage on sensitive issues
- Tripp Burwell (2009), Rural Namibia
  - People are not very politically active. They are frustrated with the government because they don't keep promises of help.
  - They are environmentally aware because they depend on the environment for their livelihood. Not aware of/concerned with climate change.
    - Difficult to talk about because it's not urgent.
  - Special community – testing out community-based natural resource management where the whole community owns a piece of land instead of individuals.
  - Namibia is fairly reliant on ecotourism.

- They have been interviewed and studied a lot in the past, but it's frustrating for them when it doesn't result in help.

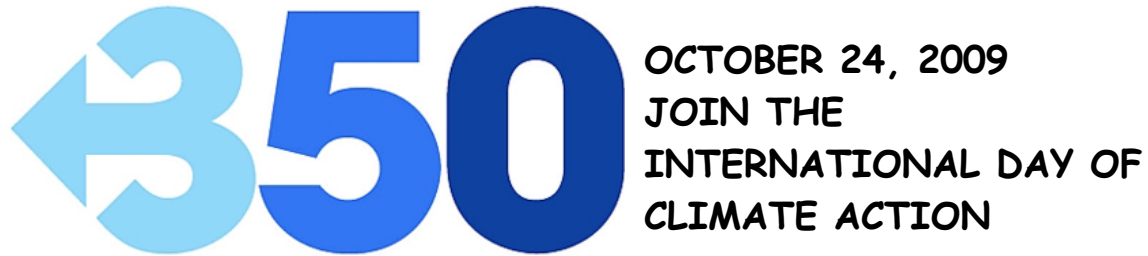
#### Asia:

- Nial Rele (2012), India UWC
  - Working on carbon neutrality with students and faculty
  - Climate change not a real big issue to people where he was
  - The government is taking good steps→ not a social issue, they have other priorities
  - Activism and getting a big group together pretty easy
- Connor Williams (2009), India (Brown Program)
  - Environmental issues big in India
    - People are keyed in because there's obviously a problem
    - Landslides—evidence of degradation
    - Climate change not a focus—people more concerned with other issues
  - Political impact need to show actual benefits of action
  - Government action in Dehli—Smog
    - Initiatives to change transportation
    - People aware of sickness due to smog
    - Showed benefits of switching energy sources—health benefits
  - Focus on health/economic benefits instead of environment
  - India generally a lawless place
  - People are open to environmental change, but if benefits can't be shown, things won't change
  - WATER—big environmental issue. Connect climate change to that
  - Program (Brown in India)—students on this program don't necessarily want to engage in India—just want to go and do their own thing
    - Engage programs like SIT on issues like 350
  - Trains are big source of transportation
    - Government willing to change regulations
    - Retrofit brake units
- Dan Kane (2009), Darjeeling Region, India
  - There are lots of NGOs working on projects such as microfinance, forestry and other environmental issues
    - There is at least awareness/knowledge about the key issues
    - Engagement with environmental issues is limited to students (mostly local students or boarders from Darjeeling and throughout India) as well as the affected parties (such as farmers)
  - India is a large and diverse place, though there are commonalities
    - Health is a huge issue everywhere
    - Government is generally inefficient—going through government may not get help/money/resources/support through to the neediest people
    - Regulations are not necessarily abided by—there's a disconnect between law and action
    - Water is a top concern
  - Popular media is a great entry point—TV is ubiquitous, soap operas are more common than news programs

- People are intensely religious—religious figures have a lot of influence
- Example of a successful NGO: Prerna Darjeeling(?), tea producers that see sustainability as an opportunity
- Margaux Fimbres (2010), Hangzhou, China
  - Chinese peers (roommate)—not involved with politics/activism
  - Political sensitivity—don't frame issue politically
  - Environmental focus, rather than political—framed as environmental awareness
    - Program Director encouraged competition using air conditioner hours.
  - Government controls media (once again, wary of politics)
  - Competition might be a way to engage Chinese students
  - American students interact mainly with other students/roommates—these are the people who 350 should be presented to.
  - Social events are main interaction—i.e. “going out”
    - Social interaction the best way to engage roommates and other students
    - Make it FUN
  - Idea that it can be an individual action could be important to emphasize with students
  - Incorporating an internship into the program isn't feasible—the work load is significant for the Middlebury program
  - Setting up 350 action on campus, sponsored by Americans
    - People come to American students because there aren't many of them
    - Use attention—“what are the Americans doing?”
    - Use event to spread the word, generate a buzz/curiosity
  - Needs to be in Chinese=
    - Most students don't have the vocabulary to talk about climate change
  - Obtaining permission for any kind of activities from the institution is important
    - Stress that it isn't political
  - Contact the Chinese Department for more suggestions, advice
  - Pinpoint October 24th—this won't be a semester long project/burden
- Liz Pogust (2009), Hangzhou, China
  - Protests face harsh criticism
    - Difficult to motivate people
  - Hope through Internet
    - Tons of opinions and ideas on the internet
    - Key to grouping people together—blogs, posts
    - BUT don't engage people (politically) outside of that
    - Difficult to have social, visible action
  - Earthquake—outpouring of emotions, fundraising, t-shirts
  - Environmental Education—many people aren't concerned about the environment, so some aspect of teaching is important
  - No sense of personal agency
    - People see that factories produce visible pollution, but the government controls that
    - Important to stress individual impact
  - Students don't see themselves as having political impact
    - If they do reflect discontent and protest, it's kept on the down-low

- Don't use the p-word (protest)
- Very close-knit study abroad program
  - Easy to organize group among US/Mid students and invite roommates
  - Nature of program makes it easy to set up clubs/meetings
- Program director—environmentally minded (not the director anymore but good contact)
  - Field trips—took students (US and roommates) camping to show students what's happening
  - Progressive village—built on solar power
  - Shows students what's possible—develops awareness
  - Get in touch with current director—emphasize environment with outings
- Talk to elementary schools
  - Use attention drawn to Americans to teach people/raise awareness
  - Talk about what climate change is—education about issue important
  - Invite Chinese roommates to come speak
- Chengcheng Xu (2009), Chinese
  - Organic restaurants
    - Engage in non-political ways asking people to try better foods for their own enjoyment
    - Environmental education
    - Food is everything
    - If you want to make an impact, protesting and talking doesn't do anything→ you need action
    - Internet a great meeting place and a way to bring people together
      - People get into fundraising

**Appendix C. Flyer for general pre-departure meetings**



**Find out how to engage local communities during your time abroad!**

**Visit [350.org](http://350.org) and come to an informational meeting on:**

**April 21 @ 8:30 or April 22 @ 4:30**

**In The Orchard, Hillcrest**

Contact [350@middlebury.edu](mailto:350@middlebury.edu) for more information

## Appendix D. Outline for 350-specific pre-departure meetings

Here is an outline of our 350-specific pre-departure meeting.

### Slide 1: 350 Video

- Personal Story about PowerShift 09 (Josh, Monica)
- Uniqueness of the Moment
  - Middlebury has taken a lead in climate action
    - SNG
    - Biomass Plant
    - Carbon Neutrality
  - Middlebury has been a leader in sending students abroad since the beginning
  - We are the “global generation” → the connectedness of the world and the social networking that’s available to us now
    - Climate change movement led by the youth of the world
- Middlebury has also been at the forefront of fusing global climate change with new social networks: Step it Up! → how that turned into 350.org
  - 350.org → Middlebury Alums started this and are running it, you can make an impact on the movement too
- We’re here to talk to you about 350

### Slide 2: What is 350?

- Who here knows what 350 stands for?

### Slide 3: CO<sub>2</sub> in atmosphere graph

- 350 is the parts per million carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that scientists (namely James Hansen of NASA) believe to be the safe level for the world’s ecosystems.
- 350 represents both the urgency and the ambition necessary to address climate change.
- 350 is an urgent call to action: the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is already 387 ppm.
- 350 is an ambitious goal: we will need to significantly reduce our carbon emissions to stabilize the atmosphere and eventually return to 350.

### Slide 4: 350 can unite us

- Climate change affects all people and it affects them differently
- Not only do the physical effects vary, but people’s perceptions of climate change differ geographically and culturally.
- The key is that all the technology of the global generation cannot create a social movement: technology can bridge human interactions, not replace them.

### Slide 6: a common goal

350 is more than just a number...

- 350 is a common goal that reflects diverse needs
- 350 is the physical goal of returning to 350 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere
- 350 is the vehicle for broadcasting local perspectives and connecting different experiences with climate change
- 350 is the message calling the international community to actively demand urgent and ambitious political change
- And this will happen in...

Slide 7: Copenhagen

- In November and December 2009, world leaders will meet in Copenhagen to address the shortcomings of the Kyoto Protocol from 1997 and develop a new treaty for international climate action.

Slide 8: International Day of Climate Action

- 6 weeks before this meeting in Copenhagen...

Slide 9: International day of climate action

- There will be an international day of climate action on October 24, 2009
- Chance to act—to tell a story, through an image or demonstration, and send a message to world leaders

Slide 10: the world's opportunity

- This is a chance to focus world leaders on 350; to make the climate legislation *count* towards the urgent and ambitious goal of real change

Slide 11: your opportunity

- Connect with local communities by understanding how climate change affects people and places where you'll be living.
- But ultimately this is about forming relationships and getting voices heard in the international community

Slide 12:

- Personal story about my relationship with Tanzanian host family and how I would address climate change with them
  - This process happens naturally adjusting with anything, so use it to your advantage with 350

Slide 13: Ideas

- Take away points:
  - Our hope is that you will take these ideas and expand on them
  - There are contacts in most of the countries where you will be going abroad

Slide 14: Bogota, Columbia

- Many actions have already been documented—these images show people in various countries coming together to show support for 350

Slide 15: Nunavut, Canada

Slide 16: Many actions

Slide 17: Middlebury High school student in India

- He rallied 1,500 monks for a peaceful 350 demonstration

Slide 18: Lily in Chile

- She was in Valparaiso, Chile this year
- She got involved in 350 stuff with her internship
- Worked with a school science club and environmental education program
- The kids got really excited about it
- She put together a 350 Earthday event

Slide 19: Where can you start?

- Middlebury abroad office can set you up with environmental internships
  - Example of Rachel and la vida silvestre
- Volunteering in schools
- Can contact local media to get press coverage



- Getting a local politician involved
- Local community groups, churches, etc.
- Study abroad office at Middlebury is very supportive of this idea and applying for a sustainability grant is a great way to get funding for your action
- This is also something that could be great for you and building your leadership skills
  - You can put this on your resume in the future

#### Slide 20: Documentation

- Share what you learn with the world: your most powerful tool may be a digital camera since you have access to certain networks, such as the Middlebury abroad community, Green Passport, 350.org.
- Share ideas through Green Passport
- Facebook events and groups!!
- Register your actions on 350.org, document them, and then broadcast them on the web

#### Slide 21: What We Have Learned

- We have studied abroad and been there and talked to other former study abroad students, study abroad institutions, and international students about 350 abroad
- Important to FORM RELATIONSHIPS and then address the issue
  - Don't take advantage of people
- We in the U.S. can afford to care and people in other places often have other priorities (poverty issues) → have to tread delicately here: BE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE
  - Avoid proselytizing
- People do environmental things because they are cheap and make sense → try and connect climate change action with PRACTICAL things
- This needs to be framed as a WORLD ISSUE, not an issue solely for “wealthy people”—people address the consequences of climate change everywhere but they relate to them in particular ways—for example, presenting issues as “environmental” may appear elitist
- 350 is a convenient vehicle for (a) learning about how people in the host country think about and respond to climate change and (b) serving as a conduit for local residents to share their experiences more broadly: CONDUIT FOR LOCAL ISSUES
- Study abroad is less vigorous academically and you'll have more time to plan something like this
- Time goes quickly and October 24<sup>th</sup> will come fast!

#### Slide 22: Questions?

- It's going to be hard to get to 350
- But this is an opportunity to get involved in the challenge while you are abroad